

between faith and reason, he took the familiar position of believing that he might understand and accepted through faith what was taught by the Church, but he held that the truth of what was thus received could be demonstrated by the processes of the intellect and could be supported by reason. Indeed, he maintained that the major tenets of Christianity, such as belief in God, the nature of God, the Trinity, immortality, and the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, could be reached by reason and were the inescapable accompaniments of a rational view of the universe. His most famous theological works were his *Monologium* (*A Soliloquy*), *Proslogium* (*A Discourse*), and *Cur Deus Homo* (*Why God-man*).

The *Monologium* was composed at the insistent request of students. In it Anselm engaged in a meditation on the being of God. He was keenly aware of Augustine's writings and believed that he was not setting forth anything which was contrary to them. He held that there is a Being which is the best, the greatest, and the highest of all existing beings; that whatever is, exists through Something; that this Something, this Nature, derives existence from Itself, not from something else, and all beings derive existence through this Nature; and that this Nature created all things out of nothing, but that before their creation the idea of them existed in the mind of the Creator. Thence Anselm goes on to deduce by rational processes the main features of this Nature, this Supreme Being. Without appealing to the Bible he seeks to prove and describe the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, and to arrive at the conclusions set forth in the great creeds of the Catholic Church.

The *Proslogium* seems to have come to Anselm as the culmination of long mental and spiritual struggle with the problem which it sets forth. The agony was so intense that it deprived him of appetite and sleep and robbed him of peace in his devotions. Then, suddenly, in the night, light broke and he quickly wrote down what it brought to him. Here, in a treatise of only a few pages, Anselm set forth what is often called the ontological argument for the existence of God. Anselm held that God is that Being than which nothing greater can be conceived to exist. This Being is obviously greater than one which can be conceived not to exist. God must exist in reality and not only in man's thought, for if he were merely a figment of the imagination, a Being which has actual being as well as being pictured in man's mind could be conceived of as existing. The latter must be true. To put it in still other words, reason demands the idea of a perfect Being, lacking in nothing; the idea of a perfect Being is of necessity the idea of Being which has existence, for a Being which lacks existence would not be perfect. God, so Anselm held, is not only that Being than which nothing greater can be conceived, but is greater than can be con-

ceived. From this point Anselm went on to develop the characteristics, or attributes of God much as in the *Monologium*. In subsequent centuries, it must be noted, several of the most acute philosophical minds of the Occident, among them Descartes and Kant, examined Anselm's argument for the existence of God, some to refute it and some to affirm it.

In *Cur Deus Homo* Anselm dealt with the incarnation and the atonement. To put it in somewhat different language from that which he employed, Anselm held that since by his sin man had flaunted the will of God, God whose will governs the universe, God could not disregard that sin without upsetting the moral order of the entire creation. Even though in His mercy He might wish to overlook man's transgression He could not do so without being immoral, and this would be contrary to His nature. To maintain the moral order satisfaction must be given. That satisfaction must be fully equal to the offense. Since the sin is man's, satisfaction must be given by man. Yet man has nothing which he can offer to God over and above what he already owes to God; for even if he always perfectly conformed to God's will he would be but doing his duty. However, if man were not to be redeemed from his sin, God would be frustrated, for in creating man God intended him to choose and enjoy the supreme good, which is God Himself. While none but man can make the satisfaction to compensate for man's sin, only God can make that satisfaction, for the satisfaction must be greater than anything in the universe except God. That satisfaction, therefore, must be made by one who is both God and man. For that reason God became incarnate in Jesus. God did not undertake a fresh creation of man, for a fresh creation could not have made satisfaction for the descendants of sinful Adam. He was born, therefore, of Mary, of the seed of Adam. Of the three persons of the Trinity, only the Son, begotten of the Father before all worlds, could be incarnate, for if one of the other persons had been born of Mary there would have been two sons. By the incarnation, Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, and only he, could make the needed satisfaction and enable God to forgive man without doing violence to the moral balance of the universe.

It has often been suggested that in his view of the atonement Anselm was influenced by the legal patterns of his day. These permitted the substitution of a money payment for the return of an eye for an eye or a life for a life. Anselm, so it is said, regarded the God-man, Jesus Christ, as making that substitution by his sufferings and death. It may be that Anselm thought in these terms. However, his insight was more penetrating and his view more comprehensive than the conventions of feudal society and their Teutonic background. There are hints of similar insights in Gregory the Great, with his rootage in Roman law, and, still further back, in the Old and New Testaments.